

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 H-01 MC-02 AID-05 IGA-02

OMB-01 TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-07 L-03 /077 W

-----060656Z 078022 /12

R 051100Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 886

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CHUSMTM DHARHAN

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T SANA 1315

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US

SUBJECT: F-5 PROGRAM FOR YEMEN

REF: STATE 069611; SNA 1216 (NOTAL)

BEGIN SUMMARY: WHAT ABOUT F-5'S FOR YEMEN? END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT HAMDI HAS AS MUCH AS TOLD US (SEPTEL) THAT HE HAS BEEN OFFERED -- AND MAY ACCEPT -- MIG-21'S TO MODERNIZE HIS TINY AIR FORCE. (WE HAVE REPORTS OF THIS FROM OTHER SOURCES. SEE SANA REFTEL.) HE SAYS HE HAS NO RPT NO OTHER OFFERS, AND IF SAUDIS WOULD OFFER HIM WESTERN PLANES HE WOULD ACCEPT THEM INSTEAD. HE SEEMS TO THINK SAUDIS WANT HIM TO WAIT 5 YEARS OR MORE (AS IN THEIR ORIGINAL TEN YEAR PROGRAM FOR YEMEN). HOWEVER, HE SAID, HE WOULD DIVERT HIS PRESENT PILOTS (ALL TRAINED

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ON MIG-17'S) TO F-5 TRAINING IF THE SAUDIS DESIRED TO MAKE PLANES AVAILABLE SOONER.

2. AS DEPARTMEN KNOWS, SAUDIS HAVE ASKED US FOR PRICE AND BUDGET DATA ON A SQUADRON OF F-5'E'S FOR YEMEN SUGGESTING THEY INTEND TO MOVE UP DELIVERY OF AIRCRAFT, AS WE HAVE URGED THEM TO DO IN PAST. WE

HAVE DECIDED, HOWEVER, TO "POSTPONE PROVISION OF P&B DATA UNTIL POLICY REVIEW ON MILITARY TRANSFERS IS COMPLETED" (STATE REFTEL).

3. WE HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD THAT POSTPONEMENT IS CONNECTED WITH GENERAL DESIRE TO REDUCE ARMS SALES TO MIDDLE EAST, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY TO US THIS IS REASON. IF SO, ASSUME DEPARTMENT IS ASKING ITSELF NUMBER OF QUESTIONS:

(A) ARMS SALES HERE HAVE BEGUN BASED ON SAUDI STUDY WHICH WE SPECIFICALLY APPROVED IN ADVANCE. STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MODEST IN SIZE AND TECHNOLOGY -- WESTERN EQUIPMENT FOR SIX BRIGADES OF INFANTRY (LESS TANKS) AND (AT SOME TIME) REPLACEMENT OF 25 YEAR OLD MIG'S. WILL A CUT IN PROJECTED SALES TO YEMEN ADD MUCH TO CUTS MADE ELSEWHERE? IN MILITARY TERMS, DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO ELIMINATE ALL AIRCRAFT FROM FORCE MODERNIZATION? (B) AIM IN YEMEN WAS ALWAYS TO FORGE STRONG SAUDI-YEMENI TIES AT EXPENSE OF SOVIETS. IF WE ABRIDGE PROGRAM DRastically NOW, WHAT WILL THIS DO TO SAUDIS? TO SOVIETS? WILL SOVIETS DENY THEM-SELVES OPPORTUNITY TO RESTORE SOME OF THEIR ONCE DOMINANT POSITION HERE? (C) IF USG GUIDELINES ARE BEING DESIGNED WITH OUR MIDEAST SETTLEMENT ROLE IN MIND, CAN THEY BE APPLIED AUTOMATICALLY TO A COUNTRY LIKE YEMEN, WHICH IS LONGWAY FROM THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT BOTH IN TERMS OF DISTANCE AND SENTIMENT?

(D) DOES YEMEN HAVE ROLE TO PLAY IN OUR HOPES FOR MODERATION IN SOUTH YEMEN AND HORN OF AFRICA? WILL

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SOURCE OF ITS ARMS AND MILITARY TRAINING MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IN THIS ROLE?

4. NORMALLY WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT USG CONTACT SUADIS, GET THEM TO TAKE LEAD WE CAN FOLLOW HERE TO AVERT MIG DELIVERIES. WE WOULD TELL THEM (QUITE ACCURATELY) THAT MIG'S WILL ENTRENCH SOVIET MILITARY MISSION IN YEMENI AIR FORCE FOR NEXT DECADE. THEY WILL HINDER SAUDI ROLE IN YEMEN AND CONTINUED REORIENTATION OF THIS COUNTRY -- AND POTENTIALLY SOUTH YEMEN -- FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN NEXT FEW YEARS. WE WOULD PRODUCE LOA FOR F-5'S.

5. WE THINK, INCIDENTALLY, THIS TACTIC IS RIGHT ONE AND WOULD WORK WITH BOTH SAUDIS AND YEMENIS.

6. HOWEVER, THIS TACTIC BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE IF WE AREN'T GOING TO SELL F-5'S TO YEMEN.

7. WE NEED GUIDANCE IFWE AREN'T GOING TO SELL F-5'S  
HERE. WE MUST, AT MINIMUM, EXPLAIN CHANGE OF POLICY  
TO YEMENIS AND SAUDIS. IF WE ARE GOING TO SELL THEM,  
WE SHOULD ANNOUNCE IT SOON, GIVEN ABILITY OF SOVIETS  
TO DELIVER MIG'S QUICKLY. REALIZE THAT IT IS IN-  
CONVENIENT FOR QUESTIONS OF EQUIPMENT AND OF TIME  
IN YEMEN TO FORCE DECISIONS ON POLICY. IT'S ALSO  
DISAGREEABLE TO HAVE HAMDI USE SOVIETS AS LEVERAGE ON  
US. ALL WE CAN SAY IS THAT HE ISN'T BLUFFING, GIVEN  
HIS CONCERN FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND HIS AVERSION TO  
A FIVE YEAR WAIT. SO: WHAT ABOUT F-5'S FOR YEMEN?  
SCOTES

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## Message Attributes

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